LEEDS NGT-SUMMARY OF FIRST'S STATEMENT OF CASE

First shares the vision of Leeds City Council and Metro to introduce radical improvements in public transport that deliver a world class system for the people of Leeds.

The trolleybus proposal is not the answer. The business case does not stack up, it proposes using an outdated mode of transport that would deprive the city of more advanced transport technology for the next 35 years and it would have a detrimental impact for customers on many existing bus corridors. An alternative proposal 'New Bus for Leeds' would deliver more benefits than NGT, more quickly, more efficiently and at a fraction of the cost.

First wants to work with the Council and Metro on our proposals that we believe align far better with the proposed West Yorkshire Transport Fund arrangement.

Background

- Metro and Leeds City Council are pursuing the planning, development and introduction of a 15km trolleybus system in Leeds. Known as New Generation Transport (NGT), the plans would deliver trolleybuses powered by overhead cables from Holt Park via Headingley and the city to Stourton via Belle Isle with park & ride (P&R) sites at Boddington (north) and Stourton (south). First in Leeds carry over 50m passenger journeys a year and operate several services along or parallel to the NGT proposed route.

First's 'New Bus for Leeds'

Flawed Business Case

- First believes that a trolleybus would not deliver the benefits claimed in the planning statement nor offer value for money for the tax payer. First has not been involved in the development process of the scheme and has concerns that alternative options have not been considered. The trolleybus modelling has not been analysed correctly and the demand and revenue have been overstated. The main concerns are:
  - It is doubtful it can deliver the claimed reduction in public transport journey times, especially at peak time.
  - Deliverability in journey time punctuality is highly questionable.
  - The provision of park and ride, high quality stops, level boarding and Real Time Passenger Information do not depend on a trolleybus.
  - Trolleybus technology is flawed, expensive, visually intrusive and inflexible. The comfort and quality of new passenger transport can be delivered with alternative vehicles.
  - The claimed reductions in congestion and air quality improvements are overstated.
- The NGT scheme also raises the question of sustainability with trolleybus technology only used in limited overseas locations raising the issue of maintenance and spare parts cover. In addition, First considers the funding for the scheme to be unfair and anti-competitive and may amount to unlawful state aid.

issuu-downloader.com

Outdated Technology Not Future Proofed

- One of the Company's main concerns is that Leeds will be locked into outdated 100 year old trolleybus technology for decades to come. Bus technology has made great strides in the last few years with fully electric buses already due to be introduced in York in early 2014. This comes without all the wires and poles required for the trolleybus.

- Further significant advances are certain to be achieved by 2020, the forecast date of the first trolleybus, let alone by the end of the 30 years life of the scheme.

- Through having committed £250m to NGT, with further hoped for routes elsewhere in Leeds, the city will be deprived of investment in much more advanced, better value and more flexible alternatives for decades to come.

Impact on Existing Bus Passengers

- There are concerns about the impact on other bus services feeding off the proposed trolleybus route as well as those crossing it, leading to a worse service for many passengers.

- It is estimated that over 20% of existing passenger journeys would be affected by the proposed scheme with a detrimental impact on customers and the commercial sustainability of some routes because of:

  - Abstraction of existing passengers which would potentially lead to reduced frequencies and reduce the length of operation across the day.
  - Risk of increased bus journey times making bus services less attractive.
  - Impact on outlying areas due to reduced frequencies.

- Despite the huge investment, there would be no benefit for the majority of bus passengers in Leeds or the rest of West Yorkshire, unlike with First's alternative which would apply immediately to many parts of the city and in time would bring the same benefits to other parts of West Yorkshire.

New Bus for Leeds

- First believe that Leeds can introduce an integrated approach to public transport, improving existing services that benefit customers from proposed infrastructure improvements.

- As the major bus operator in Leeds, First is promoting an alternative vision to the trolleybus scheme, 'The New Bus for Leeds' which will deliver a greatly enhanced transport service but far sooner than 2020, at a fraction of the cost and benefitting much more of the city instead of just the proposed north-south corridor of the trolleybus. The benefits include:

  - Newly designed vehicle with multi-door boarding and alighting (similar in concept to the new London Routemaster) & free wi-fi.
  - Innovative Oyster card type ticketing to reduce cash transactions on bus and reduce boarding and alighting.
  - Reduced and eventually zero emissions using hybrid technology and moving to full electric or compressed natural gas.
  - Targeted infrastructure improvements and signal priority to reduce journey times.
  - Improved bus stops with kerb guidance or Kassel kerbs to facilitate level boarding.
  - Customer hosts at busy times to assist passengers.
  - Access charges from operators to local authorities to fund infrastructure development throughout West Yorkshire.

For further information, please contact Brandon Jones, Head of Communications for First UK Bus (North) on brandon.jones@firstgroup.com or tel: 07775 824829

issuu-downloader.com